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VALLEY CITY FISHERY CENTER

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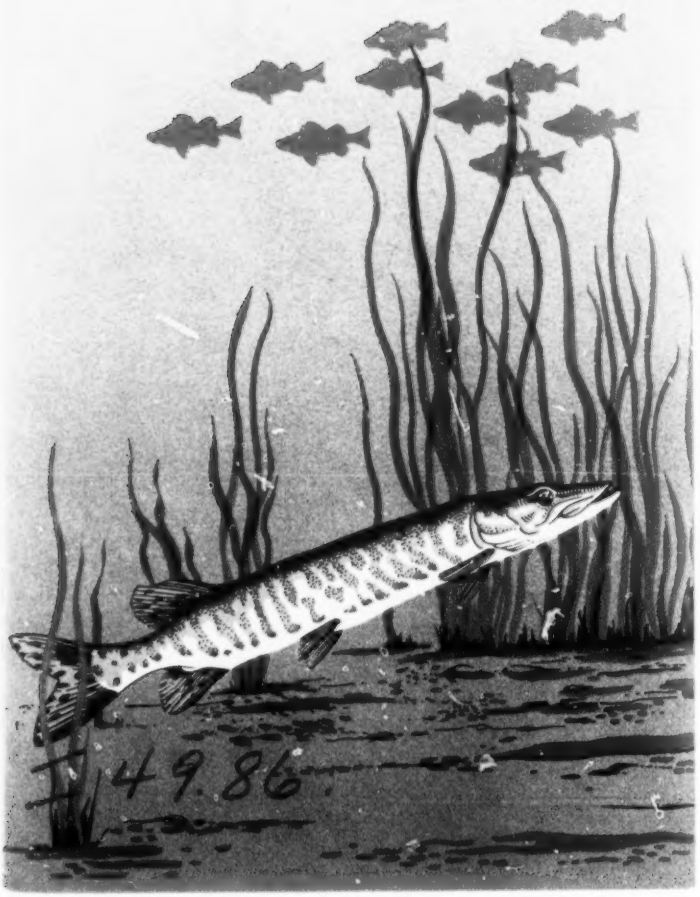

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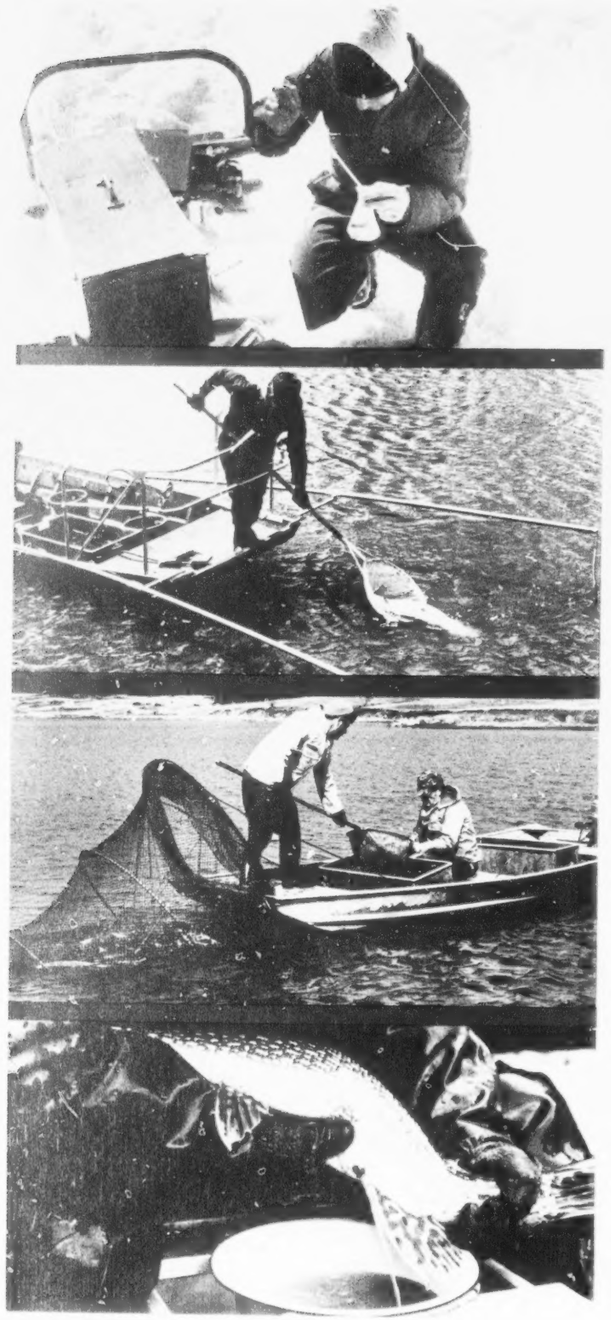


PRIOR TO STOCKING...

The cycle of stocking begins as fishery biologists monitor lake water quality and inventory fish populations. Information on species, size, and numbers of fish required is collected by electrofishing and gill netting. Production of species at the hatchery is based on this information.

Each spring, just after the ice breaks up, species such as northern pike and walleye are trapped in nets set in Lake Ashtabula The trapping coincides with spawning periods when the females are ripe with eggs. The eggs are stripped from the females and then fertilized with milt from males of the same species. Fertilized eggs are transported to the hatchery and placed in hatching jars at the rate of 2 quarts of eggs per jar. A quart of northern pike eggs contains approximately 60,000; walleye eggs are only one-half as large and average about 120,000 per quart. Under favorable water temperatures, 15 to 25 days are required for hatching. The newly hatched "fry" are then stocked into outdoor ponds. These ponds are fertilized with alfalfa pellets to stimulate invertebrate production which is used as a food source for the fish. They reach fingerling size (about 2 inches) in 4 to 6 weeks in these ponds.

VALLEY CITY FISHERY CENTER

The Valley City Fishery Center, operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, consists of the main hatchery at Valley City, a smaller subunit at Baldhill Dam, and a Fishery Management Office. Production at the Valley City National Fish Hatchery (NFH) began in 1940 and at Baldhill NFH in 1952. There are 13 fish rearing ponds totaling 25.8 acres at Valley City NFH, and 20 ponds totaling 12.6 acres at Baldhill NFH.

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FISHERMEN

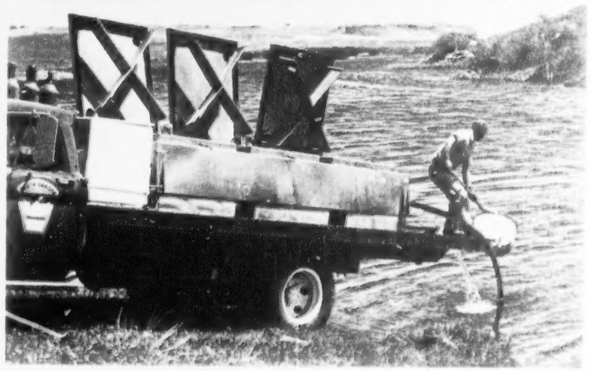
The Fishery Center is operated to provide more fish for American fishermen. As aquatic habitats have been changed by man, natural production of many game fish species has also declined. In some cases, more fish are being taken by fishermen than streams and lakes can produce naturally. Valley City Fishery Center supplements natural reproduction by stocking a variety of fish species in lakes throughout North Dakota. The result is increased recreational fishing opportunities — and more fish in the frying pan!

INTO THE LAKE . . .

Fingerlings are transported to lakes requiring an increase in population (based on prior studies) and released. Primarily, Valley City releases fish into North Dakota waters, however, some fish are also shipped to other States. Priority in the stocking of fish is given to waters on National Wildlife Refuges, Indian Reservations, National Parks and Forests, and to other Federal and State-managed waters.

The fight of a big fish, the victorious smile of a 12-year old, and a delicious fish dinner are the direct results of the Valley City stocking program.

Major species produced at the Valley City NFH are:



Left, top to bottom.
Water quality sampling.
Electrofishing.
Emptying trap net.
Taking Northern pike eggs.

Right, top to bottom:
Eggs on hatching battery.
Fry, 4-to 5-days old.
Northern pike fingerlings.
Fertilizing hatching pond with alfalfa.
Stocking a lake.

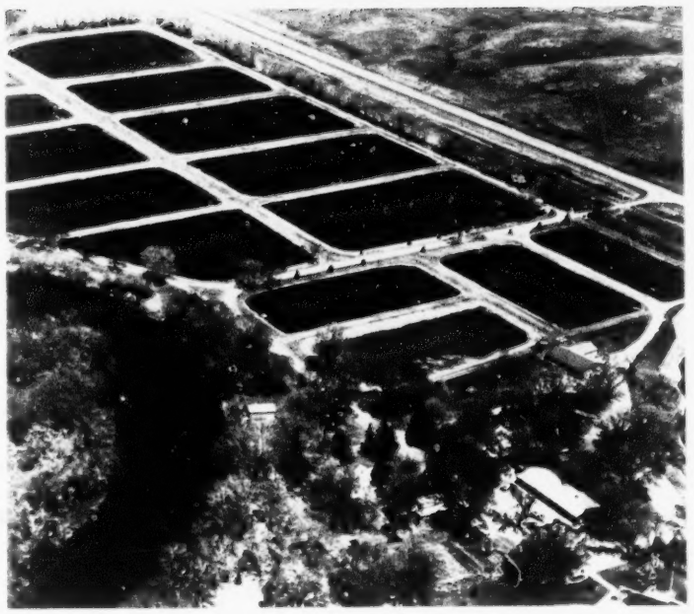
NORTHERN PIKE The "northern" is the State fish of North Dakota and its best known native game fish. It is found throughout northern prairie lakes and streams in abundance. Well adapted to shallow summer waters and the low oxygen conditions of winter, the "northern" is an aggressive predator. It is often stocked in lakes and reservoirs where it controls over-abundant smaller fish. Northern pike generally weigh 5 to 10 pounds, with occasional fish weighing more than 20 pounds.

WALLEYE Walleye are renowned for their fighting ability and table quality. "Pike Perch" are native to North Dakota, but have been introduced to many waters to increase their population. They are stocked as 2-inch fingerlings and often grow to 10 pounds in weight. The large size of the eye and its cloudy-white appearance give the walleye its name. The eye is an adaptation that allows the fish to see its food in the low light conditions of early morning and late evening feeding hours.

MUSKELLUNGE A close relative of the northern pike, the muskellunge has been introduced into approximately 20 North Dakota lakes. Other than at spawning time, muskellunge are solitary, sedentary fish lurking in concealment in the vegetation. Its large size (exceeding 50 lbs.), fighting ability, and elusive nature are contributing towards its increasing popularity to sport fishermen. Muskellunge broodstock are maintained at this hatchery.

TIGER MUSKIES The tiger muskie is a cross between a female muskie and a male northern pike. Hybrid vigor in this cross is said to result in a fish of better sporting qualities than the northern pike, but able to live where the muskellunge cannot. The males are always sterile, but female hybrids are often fertile. The North Dakota State record tiger muskie is 40 pounds.

The Catch!



Aerial view of Valley City Hatchery.

INVITATION TO VALLEY CITY

The Valley City Fishery Center is one of two Federal fish hatcheries in North Dakota. As part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service mission to protect wildlife habitat and provide wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities on Service lands, Valley City provides many benefits to the citizens of North Dakota.

High quality game fish stocked by the hatchery provide quality sport fishing to thousands. In addition, Valley City welcomes visitors to the hatchery for a closeup view of the fish production process.

National fish hatcheries serve a vital role in the management of our Nation's fish resources. The success of such programs, as with all fish and wildlife management programs, depends on your understanding and support.

For further information, contact the Hatchery Manager, Valley City National Fish Hatchery, R.R. #1, Valley City, North Dakota 58072. Phone (701) 845-3464.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Department of Interior

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